A STRICT RECKONING BEFORE A Gracious Reward

BEING

A SERMON

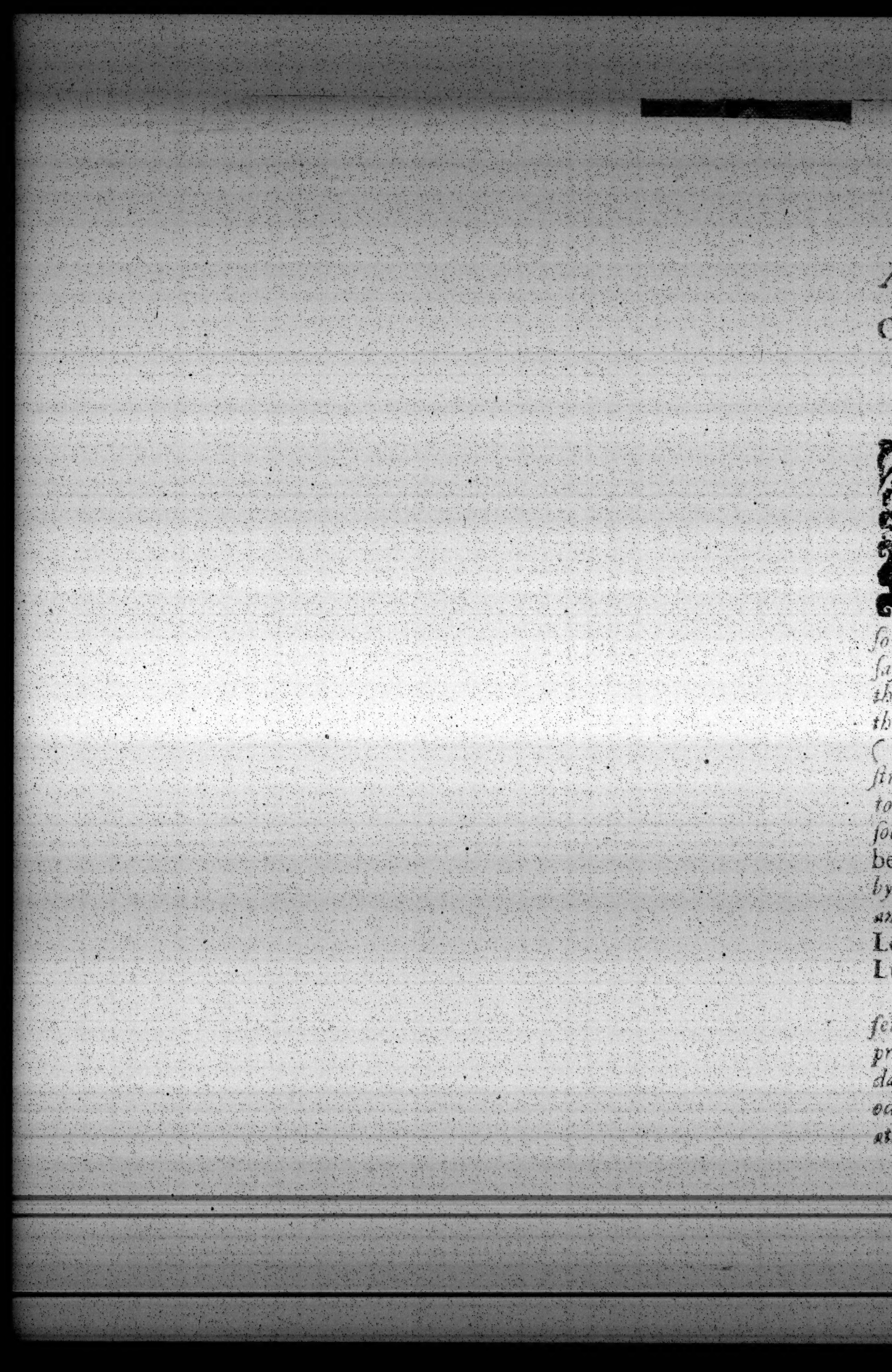
Preached the 16. of *October*, 1666. in St. *Katharine Creechurch* LONDON,

Upon the Occasion of an Anniversary Gift of the Right Worshipful Sir *JOHN GAIER*, formerly of that Parish, and Lord Mayor of the *CITY*.

By the Meanest and Unworthyest of Gods Servants,
HEN. GERARD Minister.

How Strait is the Gate, and Narrow is the Way that leads unto life, and few there be that find it. Mat. 7. 14.
Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life. Rev. 2. 10.

Printed for the Authour, 1666.



To the Worshipful and my very good Friend

ABRAHAM STANION Esq;

Of the Parish of Saint *Katharine Creechurch* *LONDON.*

Honoured Sir,

THere were so few the last sixteenth of October, *to take notice of so good an example as Sir* John Gayer *in so good a Gift yearly to us all both of Temporals and Spirituals; That I was the more willing to mention him this way, who in your observation was not so particularly as you could wish, nor so publickly as I could wish, mentioned the other way. I cannot say You were the only Auditor of this Sermon, but very near the only Parishioner at that time present; And therefore upon that accompt I hope your pardon, that it comes under you (Lieutenant Colonel) for protection. I know not what strange presumption and pretended busines makes men dare to forget Gods Ordinances and their own Duty (especially so soon after so sad a judgment as the dreadful Fire in* September *last, when most of our Churches have been already burnt by the just and eminent hand of God, for our neglect of them and walking contrary unto him, according to that threat,* Lev. 26. 31.) *But this I am sure, that one thing is needful.* Luke 10. 42.

And tis very doubtful whether God may accept of our proffers at our leisures on Sundays (when we so sinfully neglect his proffers that he gives us through his Providence on the Week-dayes) but justly may refuse to smell the savour of our sweet odours, as the expression is in the afore quoted Lev. 26. 31. *at the end of the verse.*

God is my witness whom I desire to serve with my Spirit in the Gospel, that my prayers are for you all. (Rom. 1. 9.) *And that I have only the same end in Printing this as Preaching of it: Not the applause or approbation of the World, but my Parishioners profit; for whom only I do intend it, and did intend it. I am bound to many of you in Courtesie, to all in duty, and I know not better how to express my thankfulness to some, and faithfulness to all, then by dealing uprightly with you in the concernments of your souls.*

It was by mere providence that I was called to exercise my Ministery in this place, and by a wonderful and unexpected mercy have my life lengthned out in the midst of weakness, I hope it is that I may give up my accompt with joy and not with grief, in that sence that the Authour to the Hebrews, *speaks* Heb. 13. 17.

I know not what secret whisper the Lords Spirit may give to the hearts of men by this plain Discourse; which though it be not with the inticing words of mans wisdom, yet of infinite weight inorder to our unchangeable Estates.

I would therefore beg not only of you (whose many immeasured favours, I desire to make a grateful acknowledgement of) candidly to accept these unpolished lines, and to read what you heard, but of all our Neighbours to whom it comes to read what they might have heard; and not censure, but believe, and love, and live the truth of God so now, that we may all stand forth in comfort another day, and receive that joyful Sentense pronounced by our Saviour in the Text that follows, which is and shall be the uncessant prayer of Sir,

Your (and their) most humbly devoted
Servant in the Lords Work,

Hen. Gerard.

Mat. 25. ver. 21.

His Lord said unto him, Well done thou good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things; I will make thee Ruler over many things, Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

THe sin and misery of mis-improving Mercies is not greater than the Comfort and Reward of those that are faithful in what God entrusts them; Nor is the Voice of Justice louder against uncharitableness, in that 16th of *Ezekiel* 49. 50.* than the Voice of Mercy in this now read to those that in any measure answer the Expectation of the Almighty.

*Having Preached the Sunday before upon that Text.

His Lord said well done, &c.

Before I come to which words, it is requisite to speak a little to the scope of our Saviour in this Chapter, where he doth persist in the Description of his own glorious appearance, giving us likewise a sad account of the sleepiness, stupidity, and senselessness, in which he is like to find the World at that time, *Valde Crassus & Negligens*, saith *Aretius*; a dull, blockish, and negligent, as well as unbelieving World, of which now too too sad experience.

And answerable to those three things his Disciples had propounded in the third Verse of the former Chapter, viz. of the Destruction of the City, the End of the World, and the Signs of his coming, you have in this three General Parts.

First,

1. First, The Parable of the ten Virgins, Contesting both sorts of Professors under the Gospel, true and false, real and counterfeit, wise and foolish.

2. This that our Text relates to, of him that went a far journey.

3. The Majesty of our Lord Jesus at his last coming.

The two Parables have one and the same design, tend to one and the same thing, viz. That all of us may be found upon the watch and in our work, as the former Parable and the beginning of this Chapter. The Voyage in the 14th Verse is the Ascension of Christ to heaven (as also in Mark xvi. 19.) When he delivered; that is, he gave Gifts unto men, Natural and Graces to his Children, Eph. iv. 11. to be employed to the advancement of his glory, the Edification and Comfort of his Church. And he that hid his Lords Money, Represents those that do not employ what God hath given them to the use and end that he hath appointed it.

If you please you may take notice of three things in this Parable.

1. The condition upon which God gives what he gives, to the meaning of God in all that he bestows, it is not for men to do as they will, but as he commands.

2. The different use that men make of Gods Talents, some use some abuse them.

3. And consequently the different proceedings of God against men for men: to honour or dishonour, as you may see, comparing the 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30. Verses with this of the Text.

For after a long time the Lord will be sure to come, Verse 19. Though he seems to delay, yet not at all to be understood as if he neglected the great Affairs and Concernment of his Servants: But a threefold sense may be given of it.

1. First, After a long time, i. e. It seems so to us, but it is but little in account of God, One day in his sight but as a thousand years and a thousand years but as one day.

2. A long time, so to be understood as that men shall have no excuse for not performing their Work which God gave them in the world to do. The Master that stales long expects to find all his busines

business done; the Servant likewise takes care to dispatch it. *Multum temporis*, i. e. *Sufficiens ad Negotiandum*. He gave space to repent.

Whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our Instruction: The Lord seemed to stay a long time and yet comes; that we that hear it, and read it, may know that God is not slack, as some men count slackness; *But yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry*. And when he comes, he will reckon with us, for what we have received, yet for all we have received, not what hast thou that thou hast not received? Therefore he that had received the five Talents came to this purpose, *ver.* 20. That is, he could come with comfort, not that he had a glorying forwardness, for we read of their holy modesty in the end of this Chapter, *Lord, when saw we thee*, &c.

But such can come, they may come and lift up their Heads for their Redemption draweth nigh. And being come, you see what a welcome the Lord gives him, what entertainment he finds, such as cannot but rejoyce the hearts and souls of all that partake of it.

His Lord said unto him, Well done, &c.

In which Text we have

1. A gracious word and commendation; His Lord saying unto him, *Well done good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things*.

2. A gracious promise and resolution, *I will make thee Ruler over many things*.

3. A gracious reward and compensation, *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*: A joy too big to enter into us, we must enter into that, a joy more meet for the Lord than the Servant; yet such a Lord do we serve as will honour his Servants with such a joy.

The first of these will take up most part of our present time. *The Christians Commendation.*

His

His Lord said unto him, Well done, &c.

Where we may take notice of three particulars.

1. Gods Soveraignty and Dominion, *His Lord said.*
2. His Acceptance or Approbation, *Well done.*
3. His Eye and Observation, *Thou hast been faithful in a few things* (I know thy works.)

The first of these is not lightly to be passed over. *Gods Soveraignty and Dominion,* His Lord said.

It speaks that Reckoning and that Accompt that we must all make for all that we do receive; such Goods, such Gifts, such Abilities as fit us for any Place and Calling we are to be accomptable for; all the world is but Gods great Family, and all the fittings and endowments of men, the Talent that God hath entrusted men with; some have the Gifts of the world, Riches, Honour, Places of Authority, others Gifts of the body, Health, Strength, Life, others the gifts of the mind, Wisdom, Understanding, &c. all are from God, and unto God we must accompt for them; God expects that we should acknowledge that we hold all from him, not of our selves or from our selves. God may speak that truly which *Benhadad* spoke proudly and falsly to the King of *Israel*, 1 *Reg.* 20.2,3. *Thy Silver and thy Gold is mine, thy Wives also and thy Children, even the goodliest are mine:* and second *Hag.* 8th. I am the true Proprietory and and chief Lord of all; *The Earth is the Lords and the fulness thereof.* Psal. 24. 1. & Job 41. 11. *Whatsoever is under the whole Heaven is mine.* He is the great Professor of all, and him we must acknowledge, and to him we must do Homage and yield Obedience; And upon this account, if there were no benefit and advantage to our selves, we must appear in his Assemblies on his Court days, upon his Sabbaths, and all other times of Meeting in his Ordinances.

His Lord said unto him.

This Soveraignty of God will appear, if we consider among other things the Account God calls to Both in this Life and the Life to come.

1. The

1. The account he calls to in this Life, and that both by his Word and by his Rod.

1. By his Word, the Lord is not backward to take men to task for their actions, the Lord spake to *Adam* in the Garden, *Hast thou Eaten*, and to the King by the Prophet, 2 *Reg.* *Hast thou Killed and also taken Possession?* Hence Peter, Paul, John, in the third of *Matthew*, *O Generation of Vipers*, and *elsewhere*, and plainly to remember the Apostate, *the base Jew, and killers the Lord of Life, the Just One*, &c.

2. By Afflictions, because we stop our Ears to the Voice of the Charmers; *Charm they never so wisely*.

God speaks once, yea twice, and man regards not, *Job* 33. 14. he can pass by what he speaks, and therefore he shews his further power over us, And he calls us to Reckoning by the Rod which we are to hear in the Text, *Micah* the ninth. All Gods Rods are Vocal, speaking as well as smiting; now least with God calls of late by variety of his smitings, they are too Mute but mingled with Inflictions, which we are to hear and them that hath appointed it; who hath not only a Permissive, but an Active hand in all our Afflictions. He hereby shews his Authority over us, and here again he calls us to Reckoning both by Inward and Outward Afflictions.

1. by Corporal Afflictions, strong Pains, as *Job* speaks, *Job* 33. 19. by them to bring down our hearts to a Reckoning for our former carriage, as some Expound that first of the *Corinthians*, the 11th. 32. *For this cause*, not only to what goes before, but to what follows after, to bring us to Judge and Condemn ourselves; Therefore God Afflicts us thus by Outward Afflictions.

And also by Inward and Spiritual, to awaken us when the other will not be prevalent, as *David*, when he was in a deep sleep of Security, God awakens him by a Spiritual Judgment 32. *Psalme* 4th. *Rored for the very Disquietness of his Soul*; God by this means brings him to a Confession, *I said I will confess*, &c.

By both these sorts the Lord calls to a Reckoning in this Life, to prevent that heavy one in the Life to come. And thus in this Life, you see, God gives us to know he is Lord over us.

But Secondly, If this will not do, there is another sad Reckoning in the Life to come that there is no avoiding. That men must abide if they do not here prevent.

A Reckoning that shall be proceeded in particularly, openly, and even by Book and Writing.

All which intimate that God is over all Blessed for ever.

1. A particular Accompt, not in gross sums.

God will not let all pass in General, as men are content to do, that have not a full Power; or as we oft deal with God in our Confessions here on Earth, laying open in the General that we are Sinners; but every particular must be accounted for, every Parcel by it self, how we have got, and how we have kept, and how every Penny we had was come by, for matter of Talent, one Talent, and two, and five, *Luke* 12. 48. *To whom much is given, much is required.*

I say all particulars how we have gained, and how we have spent; whether built our House as a Moth, as *Job* 27. 18. By Oppression or Injustice, whether raised our own Estate to the hurt of others, whether we have kept them by withholding from the Poor to whom it was due; And how laid out, whether on our lustful Lusts and Desires, *James* 4. Pride, Apparel, Excesse, or any other way of upholding Sin and Wickednesse, in any cloathed and profane way whatsoever.

And not onely for matter of Estate, but for matter of Place and Authority; whether we have been promoting Gods Glory, and suppressing all Evil to the utmost of our Power.

And for Health and Strength, know thou that for all these things God will bring thee to a Reckoning, *Eccles.* 11. 9. Therefore bids them walk in the wayes of their hearts, not by way Concession, but by way of Commination and Threatning. Do if thou dare, as God said to *Balaam*, *Numbers* 22. 20. or as *Elias* jeered the *Baalists*, bidding them cry aloud unto their drowsie or busie God, by way of Mockage or Bitter Scorn; as

Michaia

Micaiah did *Ahab*, to go up to *Ramoth Gilead*; and our Saviour his sleeping Disciples, to sleep on; *Mark* 14. 41.

Sleep on now at your leisure, if you have a mind to it, if you can with to many Bills and Halberds about you. It can never be thought that *Solomon* ever meant, *Oleum Camino addere*, to advise us to the Trade of Youthful Lusts, but to shew that we must be accountable; Know thou, that for all, for every particular, for every wanton passage of thy Life, God will bring thee, &c.

How we have used all the Members of our Bodies, and every Faculty of our Souls; Thoughts are not free in this Case, nor our Tongues our own, but for every idle Word that Men shall speak, they are to give account in the last day.

Also for all the Gifts of the Mind; how we have employed our Wisdom, and Learning, and Experience.

Also for all Passions, Dispositions and Inclinations of Heart and Soul, *Matthew* 15. 19. *Out of the Heart proceed all other Evil things.*

Whatsoever abilities we have whereby we may be serviceable to Church or State, we must give an account to God for them in every particular.

Secondly, Methodicall and Orderly, every thing in due place and order, though we may perform our Actions here confusedly, yet there mens sins will be set in order before them, *Psal.* 50.

As First, That of *Adam's* Apostacy, our Original sin, (as *David* knew who acknowledgeth he was born in sin, *Psalms* 51. and Saint *Paul*, who cryes out *Romans* 7. *O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me?*) from whence all our Actual do proceed, The heart must be begun with, because from thence comes all the outward actions of the whole man. And Those sins against the first Table, Atheism, Infidelity and Contempt of God must be first reckoned for.

Contempt of God and his Service, neglect of his glory, and the Opportunities that he gives us, (nor do I know any reason why men should think they should not be accountable for the

neglect of this present Opportunity, when God puts it into their hands, upon the Occasion that I have [illegible] in the time that the Law and Gospel come together, doubtless there will be a more severe reckoning, rather for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *at the day of Judgment*, than for *Capernaum*, *Matt.* 11.

Thirdly, and *Lastly*, the Life, that after the Gospel, or the Doctrine of the *Heathen* we have a clear place of this thought, that the object not *Moses* Law only, how much soever, but God himself, shall be the subject matter of our Reckoning, *Rom.* 2. *Thus believe that God will as well as strictly exact*, and on the other, if we would prevent the Terribleness of this Reckoning, *Thus follow God's order in our Repentance*, take that way that we know God will take. Take notice of that now, that we will never lament the Hard Evil dispositions of our Souls, as the cause of the outward Evil actions of our Bodies; begin at Original sin, strike at the Root, and then at the actual transgressions that are added.

And as it is grievous to deal unjustly with men, so it is to deal unrighteously with God; grievous to disobey the Law of God, but more to disobey the Law of Faith, to defer Repentance, to defer returning into God; Mark the pride that God will take when we shall be brought to an account, as we shall, *or he is our Lord*.

But *Lastly*, and *Lastly*, Gods proceeding then will be also by Book and Writing. The Books will be opened, *Rev.* 20. 12. The Book of God, The Word that I have spoken, *John* 12. 48. *And you have one that judgeth you, even Moses*.

And the Book of Conscience will be opened; God will then put the Memories of men to task, as *Abraham* did *Dives*, in the 16th. of Saint *Luke*, Son Remember, Sinner remember that thou hadst Riches and didst not employ them to the use I intended, directed and commanded; Remember thou hadst Offices and Authority in Church and State, and didst not bend to the Punishment of Wickedness and Vice, and to the Maintenance of Gods true Religion and Vertue.

Remem-

Remember thou hadst Wisdom and Learning, and set the people on God had no advantage by it, Remember what Opportunities thou hast carelessly lost, wilfully neglected and wickedly baulked, for thy own by-respects into the World, meerly, lewdly taking away that time that might have been Devoted to God: *The sins of Judah are Written with a Pen of Iron*, in the Tables of Jeremiah, God hath them engraven upon the Tables of their own hearts, and will have Anathams things against men that have acted long time before and had quite forgot (as you know Jer. speaks of Gods making him to possess the sins of his Youth) and in all these the Lord will appear Righteous in the sight of Angels and of Men, when there is nothing to behold why Justice should not pass against the sinner and all will be done in so exact a manner, that all that God Charges the Sinners with shall be done in Writing, and they will find it to themselves plainly before their eyes, so much kept Injuriously from the Penetrating the Church of God, from relieving the Poor, &c. All down: thus 'tis, saith God, it would not have been here if it had not been so: It is Written with thine own hand which thou canst not go against, thou hast made this Impression upon thy Conscience by self, with thine own guilt, thou canst not deny thine own Hand-writing, and especially when no one had the keeping or Keeping of the Book but thy self. And thus Beloved it is clear enough that God will make us know he is Lord over us in another World, if we will not know it in this.

The Lord fitted unto How

Before I proceed, I would desire you to reflect a little upon what hath been said, and let the Consideration of it prevail with us to reckon with our selves before God come to reckon with us. Or if you will, there is a twofold reckoning we are to make in order to our Escaping the Terribleness of the reckoning of God.

1. With our selves.
2. With others.

In

First with our selves, with our own hearts, take all advantages and opportunities we can to reckon with them. Descend into our selves (which the Lord looks for) especially on such a Canticulous time as this is *for us*, to [illegible] for he may now for the want of it, when Christ comes with Judgment to try us, shew to thy face, thy own heart, that I am now ashamed of my disgrace, see thy Pride and Ambition hath put me upon, be with Meekness, reckon why we did employ our breath and words, the time and attention of Office, reckon whether we did endeavour to Conform to God's Word as our Rule; call our selves to an account for Neglect, where we have been remiss and slack, what good we have done or received, whether our Recreation were lawful, and then lawfull *Speech and cry aloud* (as Lavater says).

Men may talke to our face, God, and much to their ease and satisfactions, but for certain let them know it (their Account here after) is not here. Therefore let that Counsel in the 4th *Psalm* be taken by us all, to Commune with our own heart, and in our Chamber, as it is there said, before you omit it not, rather take time from your sleep, than that that Duty should be neglected.

Secondly, As with our selves, so with others; that is, so to carry our selves that we may be able to appeal to any in comfort in a dying hour; that Magistrates may be able to say, as 1 *Sam.* 12. 3. *Whose Ox have I taken? whom have I defrauded?* That Ministers may appeal as St. *Paul*, *Acts* 20. 26. When he could call them all to Witness that he was pure from the blood of all men; that Parents also may reflect with comfort upon their fathering their Children in the ways of Piety, by Example and Instruction.

And all who have any way done wrong by unjust sin, should reckon by restitution.

There is nothing got by Injustice, for if there be not a reckoning here, it will be to their sorrow another day, *Jam.* 5. 3. *It will Eat their flesh as fire, as if men shall receive for the wrong that they have done, for there is no respect of Persons with God.* Zacchæus, when Salvation was brought to his house, made Profession of a fourfold restitution to any that might say he had done unjustly to them. And though according to this reckoning many would have

but

but little left, yet it were better done than that a good Conscience should be wanting, which is a continual Feast, yea and continual Cloathing as well as continual Food: All other Feasts to this being stark hunger; This a full and lasting Feast, not for a day, as that of *Nabal*, nor for seven days, as that of *Samson*, no nor of nine score days, as that of *Ahasuerus* but a durable continual Feast, without intermission of Solace or interruption of Society. The way to turn our whole life into a Festival, being to get and keep a good Conscience. The Heathen Philosopher could say, *O vitæ philosophia Dux!* A good man keeps Holy day all the year about. *Via Ergo Charitatis semper Festum*, saith St. *Bernard*, *Via nunquam tristis est, bene vivere*, Even reckoning in this sense with others, will keep long Friends with our selves.

And a reckoning too there must be about Works of Mercy (which is, or rather should have been the occasion of this days Meeting) what we have been wanting in to our brethren, what we have done with any Estate that we have a long time plentifully enjoyed.

Some observe a great deal of Charity commanded and practised under the Law, and shall we be less liberal under the Gospel? is God less merciful, or has he less interest in our Estates? Men therefore that have hundreds, yea thousands, would do well to reckon what relief hath by it been to the Poor and needy; And of all Debts, be carefull of dying in God's and the Poor's Debt, God's and the Churches Debt, whole Debt soever we die in, it is ill dying in that; Agree quickly in this sense, owe nothing here but Love, that we may give up our Accompt with Joy and not with Grief, and our Lord may say, as to him in the Text; And as I doubt not was long since spoke to him whom we this day remember for his Charity; *Well done thou good and faithful Servant.*

And this brings me to the second particular in the first General which is the Approbation or Acceptation.

Where the main thing we shall at present take notice of, is, that it is not the Knowing or Discourling, 'tis not any thing but the doing the Will of God makes us accepted by him.

Not every one that saith unto me, *Lord, Lord, shall enter into*

the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. The Hypocrite may perform many Works, which by the World may be taken for Evidences of Faith, Mat. 7. 14. *Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?* and yet all this while be a Stranger to Christ, because commonly the deceitful Workman will make up in Words, what is wanting in Works, and tell us what he does not, and of the practice of those Graces, which he has not, speak well that of good Hope, which he has not, and have them in himself, since he is so liberal in the commendation of Them in others. Thinks it not sufficient to commend Virtue, and Graces, good Books, good Christians, and all that is good, but follows them not, and tells us that excellent thing is done in order to Imitate, as Religion enough abroad to commend it, but not for the Love of Virtue, but that he may be thought religious without it; he hates the good in others, and speaks well of Them, as the Scribes did to the Prophets that were dead, but persecuting the Living, *Mat.* 23. 29. They build the Tombs of the Prophets that were sent unto their Fathers; but kill those that were sent unto themselves, verse 34. Or as they that prated *Abraham* and *Moses*, but cared not for the graces of the one, but with the Lord appeareth, as we see in the Text, must with Him put their hand to the Work. The true Christian is more ready to be good himself, than to commend it in others. The Love of it in others, provoketh him and engageth him to be the more studious to seek after it himself; his commendation of it stirs him up to imitation: he is therefore diligent to read, and hear, and enquire after the wisdom and actions of the best of men that have written the fairest Copies for himself to follow; those that by Faith and Patience inherit the Promises. *Heb.* 6. 12. *Chap.* 12. 1. Being compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, they cleanse themselves from all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit; and *Heb.* 12. 1. *Run with patience the race that is set before them.* It is not speaking for good or against evil that makes us amiable in the sight of God, *True well done*: Hypocrites may speak against those Vices that they never defert, speak against covetous

practises,

practises, which yet have hearts exercised therein. 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. which they constantly follow as the Artificer doth his Trade. Speak also about Controverſies which are not for Edifying, exercise themselves more in difficulties and subtilties than in plain truths. 1 *Tim.* 1. 6, 7. and so on, as if it were a goodly thing to dissent from others; instead of striving to be one of them that should be saved, rather dispute only about ways that lead not to Salvation, asking more out of Curiosity and Contradiction than seriousness what they should do to be saved. But beloved, of whom I hope better things, that accompany salvation; you see it is not, Well said, but *well done*; I might have insisted in all the Goods and Gifts of the world, and have enlarged according to St. *James*, 'tis not saying be ye warmed, be ye cloathed, but the action it self is blessed, and shall be blessed, as in the end of this Chapter of my Text, *Come ye Blessed, for I was hungry and ye fed me* (for) not for the cause, but the Evidence: *Naked and ye cloathed me, &c.* But I shall sum up this with one use of Exhortation only in the words of the Apostle, in the third of *Titus*, v. 8, 9. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works: these things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish Questions, and Genealogies, and Contentions, and Strivings about the Law; for they are unprofitable and vain.* These things I will that thou affirm; that is, That which we are constantly to Preach and you to practice, to bend our Wits & beat our Brains about; for as the Apostle says, *Eph.* 2. 10. We are created unto good works.

And this general Exhortation I might branch into five or six particulars.

1. That we labour after an Inclination and Propensity to a godly Life, *Ps.* 119. v. 36. & 112. *Encline, &c.* a heart inclination.

2. That there be a readiness to every good work in opposition to that Listlessness, and Sluggishness, and Weariness, we are apt to have in the work of God.

3. That it be our main End, as it is our Errand & Business & employment, γυμνάζειν, to exercise our selves in Godliness, 1 *Tim.* 4. 7.

4. That we do it constantly and perpetually, not once or twice,

 but

but to be fulfilling them and maintaining, and 1 *John* 3. 7. He that doth Righteousness; that is, not only in time of fear and danger (as some of us upon the late astonishing Fires) but that we be not weary in well-doing, as *Gal.* 6. 9. Not to faint under any discouragements, but always remembring that good actions shall meet with a good reward, 1 *Cor.* 15. and the last.

5. I insist upon the Universality, That we maintain good Works; both sorts of the first Table, and of the Second, Worshipping God in sincerity and truth, keeping the Sabbath, and being zealous for God's glory on the one hand, and likewise Works of Liberality and Mercy, Justice and Equity, on the other.

6. And lastly, That we maintain good Works; that is, zealously and earnestly, being a peculiar people zealous of good Works.

And this would bring me to another note under this Head, to explain what it is to be faithful to what God entrusts us, to observe right Ends and Rules, the will and honour of our Lord, what he commands and expects. To abuse what God gives, is to fight against him with his own weapons, and to use our wisdom, and strength, and power, *Acts* 24. 1, 2 in the ways of sin upon our lusts, *Jam.* 4. 3. (Our wit as *Tertullian* to cry down the ways of God) is the way to become an Enemy unto God, and for which we deserve to be brought out and slain before him, *Luke* 19. 27.

And on the other hand, to have Riches and to relieve not the needy, to have Authority and help not the oppressed, to have Wisdom and instruct not the ignorant; This is to hide our Talent in a Napkin, and as far from truth and faithfulness as the other.

But Thirdly and lastly, The other thing under the first general Head, was God's Eye and Observation implyed in these words; *Thou hast been faithful in a few things.* Before or when thou wast under the Fig-tree, I saw thee, says Christ unto *Nathanael*: So here, I saw, I observed, *Thou hast been faithful*; I have seen in secret, and now Reward openly.

That therefore that I would here mention, is the great Attribute of God's Omniscience, who by one single act beholds all things both past, present, and to come; God's knowledge being *simplex intuitus*, a direct beholding every thing together; God is *Deus Coelum*,

Oculus, All Eye, beholding every thing in the most perfect and infallible manner, as Heaven is. Attributes that the Scripture often mentioneth, and on which I shall more immediately insist. And for the better leading on of it, I shall give you in a few particulars, as briefly as possible.

First, There is not the greatest Secret in the world, but is manifest and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Though God doth it secretly, saith God to *David*, but I will punish openly. This was that which took with the Woman of *Samaria*, in the 4th of *John*. She [illegible] when she heard Christ speak of her Adulteries which she privately lived in; Come (says she) and see a man which told me all that ever I did, She perceived by what he told her, that there was nothing hid from him.

Secondly, The Lord knoweth the very inside of these Secrets; The very Secret of those Secrets. The very Core as well as the Skin; for all the Sheeps Clothing God knows who are Ravening Wolves within, he doth not judge according to outward appearance, he requires truth in the inward part, he looks to the inside of things, looks to the very bottom of our doings. *Luke* 16. 15. That which is highly esteemed among men may be an Abomination in the sight of God. That of the heart is of the price of God. *Rom.* 2. *ult.*

For Thirdly, He knows the very heart and principle of all our actions, the root of all our thoughts, *Jer.* 17. 10. He hath a key to the very Closet of our hearts, as much as one man may know another's, when it is manifested and discovered, so God knows it far more fully without discovery, 1 *Kings* 8. 39. Went past, mine heart, &c. he knows the hearts of the Children of men, of the Wise as well as of the Foolish; Those who have the deepest Counsels, and the most subtil turnings of Spirit, they are all known unto him. Therefore we do well to put it to our selves as the Church doth in the 44 *Psal.* 21. Shall not God search it out? See according to my usual custom of turning unto places; that they may come with the more Power and Divine Authority upon us.

Fourthly, God knows not only the heart as the seat of all our secret thoughts, and actions, and motions of the Soul, the shop

where every thing is numbered, and [illegible] all the manifold Effects and Products thereof, as the Spinner knows all the Springs and Motions of the Watch that he makes, the least motion can never [illegible] his knowledge, [illegible] in the very Womb [illegible] of our Hearts, [illegible] into thoughts. *Psal.* 139. 2. Lord before a thought is in our heart, or while our thoughts are a-framing, before they are conceived and formed. As where the Arrow shall light that is shot out of the Bow, and thousands of thoughts that pass from us, that we ourselves cannot reckon or remember, are all known to God.

Therefore think not to turn within your selves, *Man*, as Hypocrites are never without their starting-holes, out of which they must be forted. Infinite turnings and windings in the hearts of men studious to deceive themselves, but think not to deceive God, for *he is not deceived*, his Eye is upon all. Therefore our Saviour spends much time against sinful and unfruitful thoughts, *Matt.* 6. And in the 8th. of the *Acts* 22th. The Apostle speaks of the thoughts of the heart, for which he stood in need of forgiveness from that God that understood it, and *Deut.* 15. 9. Beware that not a thought of sin give it not entertainment in a thought; God knew from all Eternity what thoughts and what Affections every one would have, and told *Peter* before-hand, he would deny him.

Fifthly, He knows so as to know better than our selves what we will think and do, 1 *John* 3. 20. God is greater than our Hearts. Those Corruptions that are great in our own Eyes, are greater in Gods Eye; he sees more Pride, and more Guile, and more Unbelief.

Sixthly and lastly, God doth not only know so, as to have a mere knowledge, a bare beholding of our thoughts and actions, but as a Judge to approve or condemn them: he beholds the way of the wicked and sinful to punish it, a little after the Text, and the way of the faithful and Righteous to reward it, in the words we have been now speaking to: *Well done thou good and faithful Servant; thou hast been faithful in a few, &c.*

The use of this should be to quicken us to sincerity in the ways of Godliness; It is a vain thing to have a [illegible] of [illegible] that we

do well, if the Lord is not *Well done*. Little comfort is there (say we are faithful, &c.) in that, not we are faithful; Vain to bless our selves in Gods Graces. We must not look to put off God as we do men, by Allegations; search him then can. Many, as one, dies, that they be placed for Saints in Heaven by men on Earth, which will not be in that time Roaring within for Damned Miscreants in Hell. Let the All-seeing Eye of God, daily provoke us to sincerity, not to do what we do, to be seen of men; it is enough that (*Jesus*) it is enough that this day God beholds us; the people that absent themselves from duty in these days of danger, we may pray as our Saviour did, when in a sorrowful condition, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*. But let others neglect, let not us, not discourage us, *Ephesians* 5. 16. *Redeeming the time, because the dayes are evil.*

There is another thing we might take notice of in this Part of the Text, and that the Lord is pleased to call, what he gives men, *Precious things to shine by*, not only the Affections of this Life, but the most glorious things of this Life are not worthy to be compared to what neither eye hath seen, &c. *That God hath prepared for those that serve him in truth and faithfulness.*

And this would bring me to the Second Part of the Text, The gracious Promise and Condition. Intimating that, He that hath, *i. e.* That improves what he hath to him, shall be given. And as to Acts of Charity, That there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.

Though men will no more believe it, than he did the plenty the Prophet foretold 2 *Kings* 7. Or *Lazarus* Sisters, that Christ would bring him to Life. But ready to say as they in the 78 *Psalm*, Can God bring it thus about? He smote the Rock, but can he give Bread too to his People? But thus you see it is in the Text, *I will make thee Ruler over many things*, having Relation to this Life and the Life to come.

The

The [illegible] thing is of our Lord into [illegible] the Candidate to Enter, [illegible] an Entrance, [illegible] The Gracious Reward of Obedience.

[illegible] of the Lord throughout Ireland. Opportunities [illegible] unto another Year, [illegible] Let us consider what we have heard, and make Confession of Praying to be saved.

FINIS.